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A Critical Examination Concerning Metropolitan Saba of the Antiochian Archdiocese: Exposing His Ecumenist Lies

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On Holy and Bright Friday, an article titled “The Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian Churches: An Objective Presentation” was published on the official Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese website. Written by Metropolitan Saba Isper, the First Hierarchy of the Antiochian Archdiocese. This article aims to address a longstanding issue that has plagued this heretical and schismatic jurisdiction: their eucharistic communion with the ecumenically condemned Monophysites, a relationship that was synodally approved in 1991 [1].



What makes this article especially problematic is that it is filled with lies and half-truths designed to downplay the extent of the Patriarchate of Antioch’s relationship with these Monophysite jurisdictions. The article not only seeks to mislead and deceive the faithful about their historical ties but also advances the pan-heresy of ecumenism. In doing so, it creates a shield to protect guilty hierarchs from scrutiny and exposure for their apostasy from Orthodoxy. The bottom line is that Metropolitan Saba’s article was not written for the benefit of the faithful or to clarify the true faith. Rather, it was crafted with the intent to obfuscate the misdeeds and heresy of the pseudo-bishops of the entire Patriarchate of Antioch. It is a method of gaslighting, designed to keep the faithful in their place, to discourage questioning of the church’s official

narrative, and to prevent free and independent thought among the laity—so that they simply “shut up and do as they are told” by the “officials” of the Antiochian Patriarchate.

You, in turn, might ask: what is the purpose of this article I am reading now? The purpose of this article is to lay out the historical truth, to sift through the demonic doublespeak of Metropolitan Saba and the Antiochian Patriarchate, and to present the historical facts as they actually are. It is meant to allow the clergy and laity of the Antiochian Archdiocese to see for themselves what their hierarchs have been—and still are—doing behind the backs of the laity, so that they can critically evaluate the information and make up their own minds concerning these issues, without the gaslighting and manipulation of these Antiochian pseudo-bishops.

In his introduction, Metropolitan Saba states that he has been receiving many questions about these issues, both in person and via email, due to the recent exposure of these topics. In this introduction, he subtly claims that these questions arise because of various digital platforms allegedly spreading misinformation about the Patriarchate of Antioch and its relationship with the Monophy jurisdictions. Metropolitan Saba surreptitiously writes the following:

In this article, I address a sensitive issue that has been raised in various circles within our Archdiocese. I have received several questions during my pastoral visits or via email regarding the Oriental Orthodox churches (non-Chalcedonian), in general, and the Coptic Church, in particular. Many people are confused due to the lack of accurate and official information on the one hand, and the abundance of conflicting information now available on the internet through its various platforms on the other hand. The digital platforms have opened the possibility for everyone to present their own views as though they were the official church position [2].

What is particularly surreptitious about this paragraph is that, right away, Metropolitan Saba claims he is writing in general terms but then specifies that he is addressing “the Coptic Church in particular.” He does this because he knows very well that the Patriarchate of Antioch has never officially entered into any eucharistic agreement with the Coptic Monophysite Church of Egypt, but it has most certainly entered into eucharistic communion with the Syriac Monophysites through a Patriarchal and Synodal Letter dated November 12, 1991 [3].

In this second introductory paragraph, he writes the following:

First, I tell my spiritual children that speaking about theology requires not only goodwill but also scientific and objective theological knowledge, as well as the ability to express oneself accurately, with precision in the use of terms and expressions. Additionally, humility is essential, enabling the speaker to be open to the Holy Spirit for inspiration in every word spoken. The speaker should not monopolize the Church’s stance as his own, whether he is a cleric, monk, layperson, or even a theologian [4].

In his second introductory paragraph, Metropolitan Saba immediately frames the direction of the article as an appeal to his authority as both a spiritual father and a bishop. He asserts that to engage meaningfully with his argument, one must adopt a cooperative attitude toward the subject and possess sufficient theological knowledge to fully comprehend it. This is a classic preemptive framing technique — he seeks to manipulate the reader’s mindset before even presenting his case. In essence, he positions the reader as needing to be in agreement with his perspective, aligning with his position, and possessing theological expertise on the matter.



Metropolitan Saba Praying with the Monophysites: "Let a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, who has only prayed with heretics, be excommunicated: but if he has permitted them to perform any clerical office, let him be deposed." - Apostolic Canon 45

However, only part of this is true. Is it necessary to be cooperative and agreeable to his position in order to understand the theological points he is about to make? Clearly not. Is some basic understanding of theology and its historical context required to engage with the subject matter? Yes, but that is not the same as what he implies. His criteria demand both agreement and expertise, which conveniently creates a path of least resistance for his argument, effectively shielding it from critical examination.

Continuing in the article, Metropolitan Saba provides a brief historical overview of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in 451 A.D. and describes the heresy that led to the calling of this Ecumenical Council. However, it is important to note that he does not refer to it as a heresy. Another issue is his consistent use of carefully chosen terminology when referring to the Monophysite jurisdictions as "non-Chalcedonian," instead of the term that the universal Orthodox Church has used for the past fifteen hundred years.

In his article, Metropolitan Saba refers to this as solely a schism, failing to acknowledge the judgment of the Orthodox Church, as defined by the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which condemns this belief to be entirely heretical. The schism he mentions began in the fifth century, when these groups refused to repent for their false doctrine and accept the Orthodox faith. These unrepentant heretics separated themselves from the Church of Christ by their own choice, preferring heterodoxy over Orthodoxy. This interpretation contrasts with Metropolitan Saba's perspective, in which he claims there is simply a "division" within the Church, as if Christ's Church can be divided [5].

In his historical overview, which begins by discussing ecumenical dialogues that took place from 1964 to 1971, Metropolitan Saba details that these dialogues and the statements signed at these ecumenical meetings are not binding on the faithful, thereby attempting to downplay their significance. We must ask: If they are not binding on the faithful, then what exactly is the purpose of these meetings? Since the inception of the pan-heresy of Ecumenism in the life of the Orthodox Church, these so-called dialogues have produced no fruit, resolved no issues, and have only created an environment where this infectious heresy grows worse with every meeting.

Metropolitan Saba states, “According to theologians who participated in these dialogues, the issue is primarily linguistic,” [6] when referring to the Monophysites’ continued acceptance of their heresy and their persistent rejection of true Orthodox doctrine and the Ecumenical Councils that defined them. If we take this at face value, the faithful are being told by these modern academic theologians that the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, got it wrong and confused what they deemed a heretical theological issue with what is merely a linguistic one.

Are we to accept what these modernist academic theologians say? That the Fathers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, confused a linguistic issue for a doctrinal one? To accept this, as they do, would be nothing less than blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which, according to the Gospels, is the only sin that will not be forgiven.

The Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and their righteous, God-guided decision were not at all ambiguous about their theological condemnation and anathematization of the Monophysites—rebranded by modernists today as Miaphysites. They knew exactly what they were doing. In the decree of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, we read:

These things, therefore, having been expressed by us with the greatest accuracy and attention, the holy Ecumenical Synod defines that no one shall be suffered to bring forward a different faith (ἐτέραν πίστιν), nor to write, nor to put together, nor to excogitate, nor to teach it to others. But such as dare either to put together another faith, or to bring forward or to teach or to deliver a different Creed (ἕτερον σύμβολον) to those who wish to be converted to the knowledge of the truth, from the Gentiles, or Jews, or any heresy whatever, if they be Bishops or clerics, let them be deposed— the Bishops from the Episcopate, and the clerics from the clergy; but if they be monks or laics, let them be anathematized!

After the reading of the definition, all the most religious Bishops cried out: “This is the faith of the fathers: let the metropolitans forthwith subscribe to it: let them forthwith, in the presence of the judges, subscribe to it: let that which has been well defined have no delay: this is the faith of the Apostles: by this we all stand: thus we all believe” [7].

The Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council themselves affirm that these matters were “expressed by us with the greatest accuracy and attention” [8]. According to most historical accounts, between 500 and 600 bishops accepted the Chalcedonian Definition. Nevertheless, certain contemporary academic theologians propose that the Fathers were confused or mistaken, attributing the divisions not to substantive theological differences but merely to linguistic misunderstandings. Such a narrative constitutes what is termed in the historical profession as historical denialism, or more precisely, historical negationism—the denial or distortion of established historical facts for political, ideological, or personal reasons. Regrettably, among many modern ecumenists, this approach appears to have become a standard mode of interpretation.

What is particularly noteworthy about the interpretation offered by these academic theologians, pseudo-historians, and Metropolitan Saba's adoption of their position is that, in doing so, he refutes even the doctrinal teaching on this very matter according to his own New Calendarist saints. In the *Life of Saint Paisios of Mount Athos*, written by Hieromonk Isaac, an encounter is recorded in which Father Paisios is asked how one should regard the Monophysites and those who sympathize with them. In this account, we read the following:

He considered the Anti-Chalcedonians (that is, the Monophysites)—along with other heretics and those of other religions—to be creatures of God and our brothers according to the flesh, in terms of our common descent from Adam; but he did not consider them children of God and our brothers according to the spirit, characterizations he believed applied only to Orthodox Christians. Regarding the Monophysites' sympathizers and their fervent supports among the Orthodox he observed, "They do not say that the Monophysites did not understand the Holy Fathers—they say that the Holy Fathers did not understand them. In other words, they talk as if they are right, and the Fathers misunderstood them. He considered proposals to erase from the liturgical books' statements identifying Dioscorus and Severus as heretics to be a blasphemy against the Holy Fathers. He said, "So many divinely enlightened Holy Fathers who were there at the time did not understand them, took them the wrong way, and now we come along after so many centuries to correct the Holy Fathers? And they do not take the miracle of Saint Euphemia into account? Did she misunderstand the heretics' tome too?" [9].

It is evident that Metropolitan Saba—once described by a well-known New Calendarist priest in Florence, Arizona, as a traditionalist bishop—is anything but, and appears to hold in higher esteem the views of ecumenist academic theologians and his ecumenical relationships with the Monophysites, despite the clear teaching of the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and even the testimony of his own New Calendarist 'saints' and elders.

This doublespeak concerning eucharistic union with the Monophysites is nothing new for the false-teaching hierarchs of the Patriarchate of Antioch. In an article published in *The Word*—the *official* monthly magazine of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America—in June 2001, this very question of Eucharistic communion was posed to Metropolitan George Khodre of Mount Lebanon. In that issue, he was explicitly asked whether the Patriarchate of Antioch was in communion with the Syriac Monophysites and the Melkite Papist Uniates. In the same paragraph, Metropolitan George claimed that they were not in communion with the Syriacs, yet he also stated that the Syriac Monophysites and the Patriarchate of Antioch had reached a special agreement permitting intermarriage between Monophysites and Orthodox Christians—an act in violation of the Holy Canons—and allowing shared Eucharistic communion. In doing so, he contradicted both himself and the present article written by Metropolitan Saba. This official publication of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese reads the following:

How do you define our relationship with a. the Syriac Church: are we in communion with the so-called non-Chalcedonians? and b. The Melkite Greek Catholic Church?

We are not in communion with the Syriac Church or the other so-called non-Chalcedonians. We do, however, have a special relationship with the Syriac Church, especially in the Middle East. There are many towns, especially in northern Syria, where only one parish exists, be it theirs or ours. There may be no other parish for many miles. In those cases, we allow marriages, for example, to take place in each other's churches, as well as shared communion, etc. This is a special agreement between the Patriarchate of Antioch and the Syriac Church [10].

To review briefly what Metropolitan Saba said in his present-day article, he stated: "The sharing of the Eucharist and the other sacraments has not been established between them" [11]. We can see from the *official* publication of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese that this is false — they do in fact share mysteries to include Eucharistic communion.

However, let us backtrack a bit further to the year 1990 and briefly review another official document adopted by the Patriarchate of Antioch. In a document between the Antiochian Patriarchate and the Monophysites, entitled *Recommendations on Pastoral Issues* (1990), created by the *Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches* at its meeting at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Geneva, from September 23–28, 1990, the commission received a report from its Joint Pastoral Sub-committee, which had met earlier at the Anba Bishoy Monastery in Egypt from January 31 to February 4, 1990 [12]. This document, particularly in point six of its agreement, essentially endorses the heretical branch theory, which accepts the mysteries of heretics, permits communion with them, and promotes the new heresy of ecumenism. It states: "Churches of both families should agree that they will not rebaptize members of each other, for recognition of the baptism of the Churches of our two families, if they have not already done so" [13].

Again, Metropolitan Saba, in his article on the official website of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, states that "while the churches have encouraged fraternal relations, the sharing of the Eucharist and the other sacraments has not been established between them" [14]. As we can see, there is a very clear inconsistency between what Metropolitan Saba is claiming and what is officially being promulgated and adopted by the Patriarchate of Antioch. Now we must get to the heart of the issue by examining what the Patriarchate of Antioch has officially adopted, by Synodal approval, in agreement with the Syriac Monophysites. This document, which bears the heading "*A Synodal and Patriarchal Letter*," reads in full:

A Synodal and Patriarchal Letter

To All Our Children, Protected by God, of the Holy See of Antioch

Beloved:

You must have heard of the continuous efforts for decades by our Church with the sister Syrian Orthodox Church to foster a better knowledge and understanding of both Churches, whether on the dogmatic or pastoral level. These attempts are nothing but a natural expression that the Orthodox Churches, and especially those within the Holy See of Antioch, are called to articulate the will of the Lord that all may be one, just as the Son is One with the Heavenly Father (John 10:30).

It is our duty and that of our brothers in the Syrian Orthodox Church to witness to Christ in our Eastern region where He was born, preached, suffered, was buried and rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sent down His Holy and Life-Giving Spirit upon His holy Apostles.

All the meetings, the fellowship, the oral and written declarations meant that we belong to One Faith even though history had manifested our division more than the aspects of our unity.

All this has called upon our Holy Synod of Antioch to bear witness to the progress of our Church in the See of Antioch towards unity that preserves for each Church its authentic Oriental heritage whereby the one Antiochian Church benefits from its sister Church and is enriched in its traditions, literature and holy rituals.

Every endeavour and pursuit in the direction of the coming together of the two Churches is based on the conviction that this orientation is from the Holy Spirit, and it will give the Eastern Orthodox image more light and radiance, that it has lacked for centuries before. Having recognised the efforts done in the direction of unity between the two Churches, and being convinced that this direction was inspired by the Holy Spirit and projects a radiant image of Eastern Christianity overshadowed during centuries, the Holy Synod of the Church of Antioch saw the need to give a concrete expression of the close fellowship between the two Churches, the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Eastern Orthodox for the edification of their faithful.

Thus, the following decisions were taken:

1. We affirm the total and mutual respect of the spirituality, heritage and Holy Fathers of both Churches. The integrity of both the Byzantine and Syriac liturgies is to be preserved.
2. The heritage of the Fathers in both Churches and their traditions as a whole should be integrated into Christian education curricula and theological studies. Exchanges of professors and students are to be enhanced.
3. Both Churches shall refrain from accepting any faithful from one Church into the membership of the other, irrespective of all motivations or reasons.
4. Meetings between the two Churches, at the level of their Synods, according to the will of the two Churches, will be held whenever the need arises.
5. Every Church will remain the reference and authority for its faithful, pertaining to matters of personal status (marriage, divorce, adoption etc.).
6. If bishops of the two Churches participate at a holy baptism or funeral service, the one belonging to the Church of the baptized or deceased will preside. In case of a holy matrimony service, the bishop of the bridegroom's Church will preside.
7. The above-mentioned is not applicable to the concelebration in the Divine Liturgy.
8. What applies to bishops equally applies to the priests of both Churches.

9. In localities where there is only one priest, from either Church, he will celebrate services for the faithful of both Churches, ***including the Divine Liturgy***, pastoral duties, and holy matrimony. He will keep an independent record for each Church and transmit that of the sister Church to its authorities.

10. If two priests of the two Churches happen to be in a locality where there is only one Church, they take turns in making use of its facilities.

11. If a bishop from one Church and a priest from the sister Church happen to concelebrate a service, the first will preside even when it is the priest's parish.

12. Ordinations into the holy orders are performed by the authorities of each Church for its own members. It would be advisable to invite the faithful of the sister Church to attend.

13. Godfathers, godmothers (in baptism) and witnesses in holy matrimony can be chosen from the members of the sister Church.

14. Both Churches will exchange visits and will co-operate in the various areas of social, cultural and educational work.

We ask God's help to continue strengthening our relations with the sister Church, and with other Churches, so that we all become one community under one Shepherd.

Damascus

12 November 1991

(Signed)

Patriarch Ignatios IV

Of the Greek Antiochian Church

(Signed) Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Iwas

of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch [15].

This "*Synodal and Patriarchal Letter*," formally approved by the full Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch and ratified by the reigning patriarch at the time, Ignatios IV, represents not merely an isolated opinion but an official, authoritative act of the Patriarchate itself. It was entered into jointly with the Monophysite Syriac Patriarchate of Antioch, and it explicitly establishes a form of Eucharistic communion between the clergy of both jurisdictions.

This was no private theological dialogue, no informal memorandum, and no provisional statement—it was a synodally adopted and patriarchally promulgated letter, binding in its nature and formally expressing the official ecclesiastical position of the Antiochian Orthodox Church.



Given this, how can the statement made by Metropolitan Saba in 2025—asserting that Eucharistic communion has not been established between the two jurisdictions—be reconciled with the clear historical record? Obviously, it cannot. What is even more troubling is that Metropolitan Saba, having been elevated to membership in the Synod of the Patriarchate only three years later, in 1994, indisputably possessed full knowledge of this Synodal action. His subsequent public denial of the existence of a Eucharistic relationship with the Monophysites cannot be ascribed to ignorance, misunderstanding, or oversight—it can only be understood as a deliberate falsehood. This is not a matter of ambiguous interpretation; the official record is clear, solemn, and binding. Metropolitan Saba’s misrepresentation, therefore, must be recognized as a conscious and willful act of deception, carried out with full forethought and in direct contradiction to the documented and ratified decisions of his own Synod.

Such conduct raises grave concerns not merely about personal integrity but about a broader willingness to obscure the truth of ecclesiastical policy for the sake of a false narrative, thereby undermining both the historical record and the very authority of the Synod he claims to represent.

A serious and unavoidable question must be asked: why do these pseudo-bishops and false teachers of the Patriarchate of Antioch feel so emboldened to recognize these ecumenically condemned Monophysites as truly Orthodox? Why do they openly practice their ecumenism, enshrining it in official documents such as the Synodal and Patriarchal Letter, which brazenly declares that “the coming together of the two Churches is based on the conviction that this orientation is from the Holy Spirit”? [16].

Yet, when their betrayal becomes public knowledge among the faithful in Western countries and among non-Arab Orthodox, their immediate reaction is to lie, to obfuscate, and to launch a coordinated campaign of deception through their official media outlets—issuing blatant denials of the very agreements they proudly trumpet in their homeland. This is not mere inconsistency; it is deliberate, calculated duplicity. It exposes a hierarchy more devoted to preserving their ecumenical agenda than to preserving the Orthodox Faith. Their actions are not merely scandalous; they constitute a premeditated assault on the truth and a conscious betrayal of Holy Orthodoxy itself.

Metropolitan Saba with the Monophysite Syriacs during his May 2024 Ecumenical Visit

We must take a serious look at who Metropolitan Saba truly is, how he conducts himself, and his ongoing relationship with the ecumenically condemned Monophysites. In an article I wrote on May 10, 2024, entitled “*The Antiochian Archdiocese: Metropolitan Saba’s First Steps Into American Ecumenism*,” I fully document the Metropolitan’s open and boastful actions—praying with these heretics in direct violation of the sacred canons of the Ecumenical Councils. Not only were these actions committed in defiance of Orthodox teaching, but photographic evidence of these scandalous events was proudly posted by the participants themselves on their official social media accounts, leaving no room for doubt or denial.

The very Ecumenical Councils that Metropolitan Saba disregards, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, definitively anathematized and eternally condemned the Monophysites for their willful rejection of Orthodox doctrine and conciliar authority. Yet despite this indisputable theological reality, Metropolitan Saba openly, knowingly, and proudly prays with these condemned heretics. His actions are not the result of ignorance, but of conscious rebellion against the Orthodox Faith, demonstrating a shocking contempt for the dogma, discipline, and sacred tradition he is sworn to uphold.

In concluding this article, we must carefully examine the final remarks of Metropolitan Saba. In his statement, he writes: “Today, relations between the two sides are characterized by brotherhood, meeting in love while preserving the faith as each church understands it, striving to highlight points of convergence in the hope of reaching unified expression and overcoming the historical elements that have deepened the separation” [17].

One must ask: by what twisted standard does an Orthodox bishop dare to characterize such a relationship as a “brotherhood”? How can he so brazenly describe as mere “historical elements” the Monophysites’ deliberate, willful, and persistent rejection of Orthodox Christology, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and all the Ecumenical Councils?

Do true “brothers in Christ,” as these false hierarchs so recklessly call them, reject the very confession of faith that defines Orthodoxy? Do they anathematize the Councils guided by the Holy Spirit? Do they continue to venerate condemned heresiarchs such as Severus of Antioch and Dioscorus of Alexandria, men whom the Orthodox Church has eternally cast out as enemies of Christ?



Patriarch John X of Antioch with Monophysites at the World Council of Churches

Metropolitan Saba’s characterization is not only a gross betrayal of truth but a scandalous inversion of Orthodox teaching. His words reveal the depth of the deception now at work within the highest ranks of the Antiochian Patriarchate—a deception that must be confronted without compromise by all True Orthodox Christians.

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[Back to Top](#)

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